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Patent Application

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for new and useful invention entitled:

INSTRUCTIONAL YOGA GAME AND METHOD OF PLAY

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INSTRUCTIONAL YOGA GAME AND METHOD OF PLAY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. provisional application 60/447,937 filed on February 14, 2003, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a game for teaching yoga positions and in particular to an instructional game utilizing a mat and cards to teach the techniques and benefits of various yoga positions.

Description of the Related Art

[0003] A popular activity related to overall physical fitness and well-being is the practice of yoga. Generally, yoga is the practice of controlled bodily movements usually accompanied with deep breathing. Various yoga positions provide the benefits of increased physical flexibility, strengthened and toned muscles, improved digestion, improved balance, relief of stress, improved concentration and reduced fatigue.

[0004] When yoga first became popular, the primary participants were adults hoping to improve their overall physical fitness and mental well-being. Yoga was considered an excellent opportunity to relieve tension and stress from an adult's fast-paced life. However, yoga can provide physical and mental benefits to all types of participants, including children and disabled persons. Many children today are subjected to high levels of stress and pressure to perform well in academic and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, recent studies and reports have illustrated the damaging results of fast-paced lifestyles, namely poor nutrition and lack of physical activity that cause obesity, even in children.

[0005] Accordingly, programs are continuing to develop that help reverse the damaging effects of fast-paced lifestyles. Classes focusing on improved nutrition and physical fitness are springing up in schools across the country. People are taking a

renewed interest in promoting a healthy lifestyle in hopes of developing good habits that their children will follow for a lifetime.

[0006] The benefits and advantages of yoga align closely with a healthy lifestyle and provide the same benefits to children as they do to adults. However, encouraging the practice of yoga with children encounters an additional set of obstacles. The practice of yoga must compete with the television, video games, and action-packed sports, such as hockey and basketball, for the short attention span of the child. Furthermore, the various bodily positions commonly associated with yoga may be too challenging for young participants who have yet to fully develop control of their body.

[0007] Accordingly, there is a recognized need to teach children the techniques and benefits of the practice of yoga while retaining their interest and encouraging physical accomplishments at an individualized pace.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention is an instructional game that teaches the techniques and benefits of yoga to participants, preferably children. In an embodiment, the game includes a playing surface including illustrations of various bodily poses and a plurality of cards having top and bottom faces. The top face of the cards includes illustrations of various bodily poses, which may or may not correspond to the poses on the playing surface. The game may also include a random selection device including a plurality of numbers and a plurality of corresponding actions. Methods for playing the game of the present invention are also provided.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0010] Figure 1 is a top view of a mat including multiple spaces with illustrations of various yoga positions;

[0011] Figures 2 and 3 are top views of two examples of cards having illustrations of various yoga positions;

[0012] Figures 3 and 4 are top views of two additional examples of cards having illustrations of various yoga positions;

[0013] Figure 5 is a top view of an action spinner of the present invention; and

[0014] Figure 6 is a perspective view of a carrier holding components of the game of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] As shown in Figure 1, an instructional game to teach the techniques and benefits of yoga includes a playing surface 10 is provided. In an embodiment of the invention, the playing surface 10 is generally a rectangular mat 10. The mat 10 may be a sticky yoga mat typically used in the fitness industry for practicing yoga techniques. The mat 10 measures generally twenty-four (24) inches wide by fifty (50) inches long. A 24" x 50" mat 10 is typically considered an appropriate size for a child. An adult may utilize a larger mat 10. The size, shape and texture of the mat 10 are not limited to the descriptions given above.

[0016] Positioned around a peripheral edge of mat 10 are a plurality of spaces 12. Each space 12 includes a printed boundary 14, a graphic illustration of a bodily pose 16 and a title 18 of the pose 16. As shown in the embodiment of Figure 1, the mat 10 includes twenty-four spaces 12 each illustrating a different bodily pose 16. The number of spaces 12 is only illustrative and not meant to limit the scope of the invention. The rectangular center of the mat 10 remains clear of any printing and is used to practice the yoga techniques of the instructional game.

[0017] Referring to Figures 2-4, the game also includes a plurality of cards 20. In an embodiment, the cards 20 include top and bottom faces, with the top faces being shown in the figures. The top faces are imprinted with a photographic illustration of a bodily pose 22, a title 24 of the pose 22, and a description 26 of executing the pose 22. The illustrations depicted on cards 20 are not intended to be limited to those shown and described.

[0018] In an embodiment, the game includes twenty-four circular cards illustrating twenty-four different bodily poses 22. Again, the quantity and shape of the cards are in no way limiting. Furthermore, the bodily poses 22 illustrated on the

cards 20 correspond to the bodily poses 16 illustrated on the mat 10. However, there may be illustrations on cards 20 that are not shown on the mat, or vice versa. The mat depicted on cards 20 is illustrated and colored to clearly represent the correct relationship between the pose and the mat. The bottom face (not shown) may include an attractive decorative design to make the cards interesting and fun for a child.

[0019] Referring to Figure 5, the game further includes a random selection device 28, such as an action spinner 28. The action spinner 28 includes a plurality of numbers 30 and a plurality of actions 32. Each action 32 corresponds to a predetermined number 30. The numbers 30 and actions 32 are positioned in a circle about a dial indicator 34. A participant of the instructional game spins the dial indicator 34. The dial indicator 34 eventually stops spinning and an arrow 36 at the tip of the dial indicator 34 points to a number 30 and corresponding action 32. In an embodiment, the action spinner 28 includes the numbers one through six. The action spinner 28 may also include actions 32 such as “smile”, “eyes closed”, “moving”, “five breaths”, “eyes open”, and “still”.

[0020] In accordance with the present invention, the instructional game may also include at least one game piece (not shown) and a timing device (not shown). The game piece and timing device may be utilized in various alternative embodiments for playing the instructional game to be described in further detail below.

[0021] Referring to Figure 6, the instructional game may be provided with a carrier 38. In an embodiment of the invention, carrier 38 is made of clear plastic and includes a strap 40 for carrying the game. A zipper 42 may also be provided for opening and closing the carrier 38. The carrier 38 is able to store the various components of the instructional game, including the mat 10, the cards 20 and the action spinner 28. Additionally, a separate container for the cards 20 (not illustrated) may also be included. The carrier 38 is an optional feature to include with the game and is not intended to limit the scope of the present invention.

[0022] There are several alternative methods for playing the instructional yoga game. Some methods are for a single participant and other are for multiple individual participants or teams. In preparation for playing any of the games, each participant may be instructed to perform warm-up breathing exercises by breathing in and out

slowly through his nose with his mouth closed. For example, each participant should breathe at least five times in a comfortable seat position.

[0023] One example of a method for playing the instructional yoga game for a single participant includes the use of the mat 10, the cards 20 and the action spinner 28. In an embodiment, the participant shuffles the cards 20 and selects a predetermined number of cards 20. The participant then looks at the cards 20, says the title of the pose 24 on the card 20 and performs the pose 22 shown on the mat 10. Preferably, the participant holds the pose 22 for a predetermined number of breaths. Once the pose 22 of each card 20 has been practiced, the participant turns over the cards 20 and practices the poses 22 on the mat 10 again without looking at the cards 20. The goal is to memorize the various yoga poses 22. To make the game more challenging, the participant may include use of the action spinner 28. After practicing the poses 22, the participant spins the action spinner 28 and incorporates the selected action 32 with performance of the pose 22. The same action 32 may be performed with each memorized pose 22 or a new action 32 may be selected for each card 20. Alternative games that encourage a child to practice and memorize the various bodily poses 16, 22 shown on the mat 10 or the cards 20 are also contemplated by the present invention. The description of this one game is not meant to limit the scope of the invention.

[0024] In accordance with the present invention, the instructional yoga game also includes methods for playing with multiple participants or teams. To simply learn the various bodily poses 16, 22 a leader may be selected. The leader may be selected with the assistance of the action spinner 28 or other criteria such as the youngest or oldest participant, for example. The leader would select a card 20 and demonstrate the pose 22 on the mat 10. When the leader recites a code word, such as “yogateers” each participant practices the pose 22 together around the mat 10. When the leader recites the code word again, everyone sits down and the position of leader rotates to another participant in the group. The demonstration and group practice are repeated until all the cards 20 have been utilized.

[0025] An alternative game includes the use of the mat 10 and the action spinner 28. Each participant begins at a predetermined space 12 on the mat 10. One of the

participants may be selected to begin the game with the use of the action spinner 28 or other criteria. The first participant spins the action spinner 28 and moves a game piece (not shown) the selected number 30 and performs the bodily pose 16 shown on the mat 10. The pose 16 is held for a predetermined time or number of breathes. To make the game more challenging, the participant also incorporates the action 32 corresponding to the selected number 20 when performing the pose 16. This sequence is repeated among the other participants until one participant reaches a predetermined space 12 marking the end of the game. As further alternatives, the participants could utilize the timing device (not shown) or use their physical bodies as a substitute for the game pieces (not shown).

[0026] A further example of playing the instructional yoga game with multiple participants includes the use of the action spinner 28 and the cards 20. In an embodiment, a first participant selects a predetermined number of cards 20 and spins the action spinner 28 to select an action 32. The participant then practices the poses 22 of each card while incorporating the action 32. The participant then turns over the cards 20 to avoid seeing the poses 22 and the game proceeds with another participant. After each participant has selected cards 20, selected an action 32 and practiced their poses 22, play resumes with the first participant. The first participant practices the poses 22 with the action 32 from memory. A fellow participant reviews the cards 20 for accuracy. If the first participant correctly performs each pose 22 and action 32 the participant retains possession of the cards 20. However, if any of the poses 22 are performed incorrectly, the participant's cards 20 are returned to the pile. Again, the game proceeds with another participant. After each participant attempts to perform the poses 22 from memory, play continues by repeating the sequence until all of the cards 20 have been retained by participants. The participant with the highest number of cards 20 is deemed the winner.

[0027] Finally, other alternatives may be incorporated into the described games to make the games more exciting and interesting to the participants. For example, the games can be played as teams or by creating a yoga sculpture by joining participants together in various poses 16, 22. Participants could be encouraged to learn and memorize the benefits of each pose 16, 22 or to determine the number of body parts

that contact the mat for each pose 16, 22. A participant could select a card 20 and perform the pose 22 on the mat 10 under a blanket (not shown) while the remaining participants attempt to guess the pose 16. Further suggestions include a game with only two participants where one participant is a leader that demonstrates a pose 16, 22 while the second participant demonstrates a mirrored image of the same pose 16, 22. Contemplated by the present invention are any games or techniques that practice and teach the various poses 16, 22 of yoga.

[0028] The present invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to the foregoing embodiments, which are merely illustrative of the best modes for carrying out the invention. It should be understood by those skilled in the art that various alternatives to the embodiments of the invention described herein may be employed in practicing the invention without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims. It is intended that the following claims define the scope of the invention and that the method and apparatus within the scope of these claims and their equivalents be covered thereby. This description of the invention should be understood to include all novel and non-obvious combinations of elements described herein, and claims may be presented in this or a later application to any novel and non-obvious combination of these elements. Moreover, the foregoing embodiments are illustrative, and no single feature or element is essential to all possible combinations that may be claimed in this or a later application.